

REMARKS

This application has been reviewed in light of the Office Action dated October 11, 2007. Claims 1, 45, 46, 48-50, 54-56 and 60 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 45, 46, 48, 54 and 60 are in independent form. Claims 1, 45, 46, 48-50, 54-56 and 60 have been amended to define still more clearly what Applicants regard as their invention. Claims 47, 51-53, 57 -59 and 61-63 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and will not be mentioned further. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1, 45, 46, 48-50, 54-56 and 60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,708,909 (Yamashita).

Independent Claim 1 is directed to a management system, connected to a communication line, for managing maintenance of a plurality of printing apparatuses. That system comprises a reception unit, which receives a first ID, specifying a first printing apparatus having use history information showing that the first printing apparatus was managed, and a second ID, specifying a second printing apparatus as an apparatus to be newly managed. According to Claim 1, the first ID and the second ID are transmitted via the communication line, and the first printing apparatus and the second printing apparatus are different from each other. The system also comprises a search unit, which searches for first information related to a contract corresponding to the first ID, and a generation unit, which generates second information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the first information searched for by the search unit and machine types of the first and second printing apparatuses. The generation unit also generates display information

for displaying the generated second information. Also provided in the system is a transmission unit, which transmits the generated information via the communication line. Claim 1 also recites that the contract is related to at least one of contract term and maintenance of the printing apparatus.

Among other notable features of the system of Claim 1 is that the reception unit receives a first ID for specifying a first printing apparatus having use history information showing that the first printing apparatus was managed and a second ID for specifying a second printing apparatus as an apparatus to be newly managed, the first ID and the second ID being transmitted via the communication line, and the first printing apparatus and the second printing apparatus being different from each other.

Other such features are that the generation unit that generates second information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the first information searched for by the search unit and machine types of the first and second printing apparatuses, and that the generation unit generates display information for displaying the generated second information.

Independent Claim 48 is directed to a management system, connected to a communication line, for managing maintenance of a plurality of printing apparatuses, that comprises first and second reception units, of which the first receives a first ID for specifying a first printing apparatus for which a contract has been made and a second ID for specifying a second printing apparatus as an apparatus to be newly managed. According to Claim 48, the first ID and the second ID are transmitted via the communication line, and the first printing apparatus and the second printing apparatus are different from each other. The second reception unit receives a user instruction indicating

whether or not a contract for the second printing apparatus is to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus. Also present are a search unit that searches for first information related to the contract corresponding to the first ID, when the second reception unit receives the user instruction indicating that the contract for the second printing apparatus is to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus. A generation unit generates second information related to the contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the first information searched for by the search unit. According to Claim 48, however, the generation unit generates a new contract regardless of the printing apparatus managed in the past, when the second reception unit receives the user instruction indicating that the contract for the second printing apparatus is not to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus.

Thus, Claim 48 now recites the first reception unit in the same manner as does Claim 1. Also, among other notable features of the system of Claim 48 is that the generation unit generates a new contract regardless of the printing apparatus managed in the past, when the second reception unit receives the user instruction indicating that the contract for the second printing apparatus is not to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus. (Support for this feature can be found in Fig. 27A (S2705) and Fig. 27B (S2710).)^{1/}

Yamashita relates to a management system in which electronic photocopiers are linked through a network with a host computer at a maintenance company that manages the photocopiers, and with another host computer at a lease company, which leases the

^{1/} It is of course to be understood that the claim scope is not limited by the details of this or any other particular embodiment that may be referred to.

copiers to a lessee. The host computer at the lease company sets transmission times at which periodical reports are to be sent from the photocopiers to the host computer. If a particular photocopier is not registered, however, it is possible that the maintenance company may not perform the maintenance work that it is supposed to do on that photocopier. *Yamashita* provides a way to avoid this problem, by providing for the photocopier to send its ID number to the host computer at the lease company when the photocopier inquires about its transmission time. If the ID number of the photocopier has been registered and the transmission time has been set in the host computer at the lease company, the host computer sends a reply to the inquiry, thereby setting the transmission time at the photocopier. Otherwise, the host computer at the lease company can display a message to the effect that the ID number is not registered, or that the transmission time has not been set. In this case, the photocopier makes inquiry every day until its transmission time is determined.

Applicants submit that nothing has been found in *Yamashita* that would teach or suggest using the ID of a *second* printing apparatus that is to be newly managed, in addition to the ID for a first, different printing apparatus that is already being managed. Absent such teaching, Applicants submit that *Yamashita* cannot anticipate Claim 1 or Claim 48, or render those claims obvious.

Furthermore, *Yamashita* is silent as to the generation unit, which generates second information related to a contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the searched first information and machine types of the first and second printing apparatuses (as recited in Claim 1). *Yamashita* is also silent as to the search unit, which searches for first information related to the contract for first printing apparatus, when the received user

instruction indicates that the contract for the second printing apparatus is to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus, or the generation unit, which generates second information related to the contract for the second printing apparatus, based on the searched first information, and which generates a new contract regardless of the printing apparatus managed in the past, when the received user instruction indicates that the contract for the second printing apparatus is not to be made based on the contract for the first printing apparatus.

For these reasons, too, Applicants submit that Claims 1 and 48 are clearly allowable over *Yamashita*.

Independent Claims 45, 46, 54 and 60 are each respectively either a method or a computer-memory-medium claim corresponding to one or the other of system Claims 1 and 48, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with the latter claims.

A review of the other art of record has failed to reveal anything which, in Applicants' opinion, would remedy the deficiencies of the art discussed above, as a reference against the independent claims herein. Those claims are therefore believed patentable over the art of record.

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one or another of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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